



ANSERANAS MELANOLEUCA.

Semipalmated Goose.

- Anas melanoleuca*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxxix.—Cuv. Mém. du Mus. 7^e année, xi^e cahier, p. 345. pl. 19.
Black and White Goose, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 344.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 225.
Anas semipalmata, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxxix.—Linn. Trans., vol. iv. p. 103. pl. vi. *trachea*.
Semipalmated Goose, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 347. pl. 139.—Penn. Outlines, vol. iv. p. 129.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 295. pl. clxxviii.
Anseranas melanoleuca, Less. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 418.—Ib. Traité d'Orn., p. 633.
Choristopus semipalmatus, Eyton, Mon. Anat., p. 79.
Anseranas melanoleuca, List of Birds in Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 125.—G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 2nd edit. p. 92.
Newal-gang, Aborigines of New South Wales.
-

WHEN New South Wales was first colonized, this fine species was very abundant on the Hawkesbury; it is however no longer a denizen of that river, or of any of the streams within the colony; affording another instance that the progress of civilization invariably leads to the gradual extirpation of the more conspicuous of the natural productions of the countries over which it extends its sway; it is still however abundant in such parts of the Port Philip district as are unlocated by the settler, and as we progress northwards gradually becomes more numerous, until we reach the rivers and lagoons which empty themselves into Torres' Straits; here it occurs in such countless multitudes that it forms one of the chief articles of the food of the Aborigines, and was of the utmost value to those intrepid explorers, Dr. Leichardt and party, during their adventurous journey from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, as will be seen in numerous passages in his interesting account of the expedition. So dense are the flocks that occur in the northern parts of the country, that the natives are enabled to procure numbers of them by spearing; and, says Dr. Leichardt, "It seemed that they only spear them when flying, and always crouch down when they see a flight of them approaching; the geese, however, know their enemies so well that they immediately turn upon seeing a native rise and put his spear into the throwing-stick: some of my companions asserted that they had seen them hit their object at the almost incredible distance of two hundred yards."

It is well known that many of the natatorial birds exhibit most singular conformations of the trachea, but in no one species are the convolutions and situation of this organ more remarkable than in the present bird. "The trachea," says Mr. Yarrell, in the fifteenth volume of the 'Linnean Transactions,' p. 383, "is situated on the outside of the left pectoral muscle, under the skin, sufficiently raised under the wing that respiration would not be impeded when the bird rested with its breast on the ground, the parallel tubes being firmly attached both to the muscle and the skin by cellular tissue. The clavicle of the right side of the bird is of the usual character, but that on the left is both shorter and wider, having an aperture about the middle, the sides diverging with a projecting point on the inner side, to which the tube of the trachea is firmly attached, about two inches above the bone of divarication. The trachea lying on the left side of the bird, the lower portion of the tube in its passage to the lungs crosses the left branch of the furcula at a right angle, but becoming attached to this projection of the clavicle, receives from the point described its central direction into the body. The whole length of the windpipe is four feet eight inches." In young birds the trachea is not nearly so much convoluted. This curious structure of the trachea has also been noticed and figured by Latham, on the 178th plate of his "General History of Birds," vol. x. p. 295, above-quoted. The specimens from the north are somewhat smaller than those from the south coast, and have the knob on the bill rising higher on the forehead.

Head, neck, wings, centre of the back, tail and thighs glossy greenish black, the remainder of the plumage white; irides blackish brown; bill reddish brown; feet yellow.

The figure is about two-thirds of the natural size.